

time, and remains in the company of its mother until she is about to bring forth a second time. The giant ant-eater does not dig a burrow, and has no fixed abode. After wandering all day through the plains in search of ants or termites, it contents itself at nightfall with the shelter of a bush, or simply goes to sleep wherever it chances to be, amid tall grasses. When at rest, it resembles, it is said, a bundle of hay lying upon the ground. Its ordinary gait is very slow, and it is only when it is pursued that it begins a clumsy gallop. Still it does not move quickly enough to prevent a man walking at a good pace easily to overtake it.

Usually, the animals are perfectly harmless, but when they find themselves too close pressed, and especially when they are wounded, they do not hesitate to face the enemy. They then stand upon their hind legs after the manner of bears, and, growling with anger, extend their arms and endeavor to strangle their adversary or to lacerate it with their claws. And it may be easily imagined how terrible are the wounds made by nails as sharp as razors and measuring from 1½ inches to 3 inches in length, especially when these nails arm a powerful paw at the extremity of a strong limb. Thus the traveler Roulin came near being cut to pieces by an ant-eater that he had imprudently seized by the tail in order to stop the animal while running to escape the whip of a young shepherd who had surprised it near an ant-hill. The ant-eater, turning about, swept the air with a sudden motion, and Roulin saw pass, at two inches from his waist, a nail that appeared to him to be six inches in length, and that would have ripped open his abdomen from one side to the other had he taken another step. Later on, even, after the exhausted beast had been seized with a lasso, it still tried to resist by lying upon its back and flourishing its limbs.

Ant-eaters, wounded by troopers, have been observed to hang on to the crupper of a horse, and not let go until after receiving several stabs from a spear; and the inhabitants of Colombia and Paraguay assert that these edentates wage desperate conflicts with jaguars that usually terminate in the death of both combatants. It is said that the dead bodies of the adversaries are sometimes found in a close embrace. Although he had never been a witness of such things, Roulin does not consider these stories as devoid of truth. In fact, he observes that although the jaguar does not usually allow the prey that it covets time to recover itself, and although it usually reaches it in two or three leaps and instantly throttles it, it may also miss its object and find itself in a pretty critical situation. In such an event, the ant-eater will have time to get on its legs.

As shown in Fig. 2, it will sit squat and threaten its enemy, and, as soon as the latter springs, will clasp it between its powerful arms and lacerate it with its powerful claws, while its own bones may be crushed between the terrible jaws of the carnivore.

An ant-eater easily manages a dog of large size, but cannot resist a man armed with a gun. The hunting of this animal, therefore, presents no great danger, and ought, then, to offer so much the less attraction (as Des Marchais remarks), in that the ant-eater is an eminently useful creature, and that its flesh has a very disagreeable taste of ants. Yet the inhabitants of Paraguay annually destroy a large number of the giant ant-eaters, which they designate by the name of *gnouroumys* or *youroumys*, and whose skin they use as bed coverings, it being, they say, excellent for preventing kidney diseases. Individuals of this species are also sent alive to Europe in order to be kept in zoological gardens. However, it is merely through the oddity of their form that they merit a place in menageries, for, like the orycteropi, they are indifferent and stupid beasts.—*E. Oustalet, in La Nature.*

[FROM THE MEDICAL COURANT.]

HYDRASTIS VS. PHTHISIS.

By A. JUDSON PALMER, M.D.

ABOUT one hundred years ago William Cullen defined phthisis as "an expectoration of pus or purulent matter from the lungs, attended with a hectic fever." Later the tubercle was discovered, and it was found that this tubercle contained a virus. In the year 1882 the tubercle bacillus was discovered by Koch. It is now generally conceded that tuberculosis, whether of the lungs or other tissues, is coincident with the presence of these microphytes. The important consideration, then, is how to exterminate these pathognomonic germs, or prevent the putrefactive process which they induce.

I have used hydrastis in my practice for the past thirty years as a local application to inflamed mucous surfaces, and noting its efficiency, especially in inflammatory conditions of the pharynx, it occurred to me that it might be equally efficacious in the treatment of bronchitis if it were possible to apply it directly to the inflamed membrane. Accordingly, about four years ago, to accomplish this I administered it by inhalation in the form of a vapor, freed from spray, and thus secured its deposit where required. The result was very satisfactory. I then used it in a case of bronchitis complicated with chronic hepatization, due to incomplete restoration from an attack of pneumonia which had occurred two months previously. I was surprised to find that not only the bronchitis but also the pneumonic deposit disappeared. I then determined to test its virtue in phthisis. I have now been using it in the different stages of this disease over three years, and I think the result of my experience justifies me in asserting that in it I have found a remedy of remarkable efficacy in the treatment of phthisis, if properly and perseveringly used; and that the majority of cases, while in the early stages, can thus be restored to a condition of apparent health.

Precisely in what manner its extraordinary influence is exerted is a question upon which opinions may differ, but I have demonstrated to my own satisfaction that in some way it has a decidedly specific action upon this disease.

During the first month of treatment the night sweats usually disappear, and the cough and expectoration are greatly diminished; the patient has a better appetite, better digestion, and gains in strength.

In cases advanced so far as to be incurable, the patients are so much relieved that they regard the remedy as indispensable to their comfort. Its hæmostatic

properties render it of great value as a preventive of hemorrhage.

I obtain the best results by using it in combination with chloride of sodium, one part of the fluid extract of hydrastis can. to three parts of a saturated solution of the salt.

The fact that I use it in conjunction with salt may lead to the supposition that salt is the principal agent in effecting the cure; but I have obtained the same results by using it mixed with glycerine and water.

The volume of vapor should be moderate at first and gradually increased from day to day as the patient becomes accustomed to its use, after which I advise deep inspirations to insure the entrance of the vapor to the remote air cells. When patients are taking the inhalations at their homes, the physician should visit them sufficiently often to watch the effect of the treatment and to advise in regard to the strength of medicine and the volume of vapor.

In most cases I continue the inhalations once or twice daily until I observe a decided improvement, after which I regulate the frequency according to circumstances.

Care, of course, should be taken to place the patient under as favorable hygienic conditions as possible.

90 Hancock Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.

It appears from a report made by Professor Hazen, of the Signal Service, that the average number of person killed annually in the United States by tornadoes during the last eighteen years is 182. This mortality appears to be less than that from lightning strokes. It further appears that in no State may a destructive tornado be expected oftener than once in two years on an average. The territory affected is usually both short and narrow.

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